

DIMENSIONS OF ATTITUDES ON INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT: INTERNATIONALISM AND MILITARY OFFENSIVE ACTION

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The purpose of this paper is to examine empirical evidence on an hypothesis that is common in the literature on American Public opinion and foreign policy. This is the hypothesis that isolationism and aggressiveness are but two faces of the same underlying nationalist or xenophobic feelings and authoritarian or hostile or "aversive" personality traits. The data used in this study does not permit us to look at these underlying factors but it does enable an empirical test of the presumed association between isolationism and aggressiveness.

The hypothesis in question has been advanced, for example, by McClosky (1967, p. 104). He obtains two scales, internationalism and jingoism, and shows them to be negatively correlated. McClosky explains this finding by showing that both isolationism (the negative pole of his internationalism scale) and jingoism are correlated with aversive personality traits such as authoritarianism. The result confirms an earlier finding by Farris of correlation between jingoism and authoritarianism and anomie (1960). Levinson has also shown a correlation between authoritarianism and his "nationalism" scale which contains military offensive action choices as well as ethnocentrism items (1957, pp. 42-43). Along the same lines, Lane finds an association between authoritarianism and both withdrawal and offensive action in the context of Korea (1955, p. 185). Finally, Fensterwald finds a strong correlation between two scales expressing aloofness toward Europe and the U.N. on the one hand, and support for intervention in Asia on the other (1958, pp. 306-307).

As Hammond has put it, this hypothesis "... is never far from a good guys-bad guys dichotomy." (Hammond, 1968, p. 299). Aside from suspecting that this is oversimplified, one suspects that there are political implications of who is identified as the good guys and who the bad guys. Present American foreign policy goes under the label of internationalist and opposition to it—from both the right and the left—is labeled isolationist. Thus the hypothesis serves to support the status quo and discredit the opposition.

The concern with the political virtues of internationalism and vices of isolationism is, of course, the legacy of the U.S. failure to intervene against Hitler before World War II, and of the widespread and passionate determination among Americans not to repeat that mistake. In practice, however, "internationalist" policy

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in the post-World War II era has involved a global resistance to revolutionary change and a massive penetration and control of the economies of developing nations by American corporations aided and abetted by U.S. economic aid.¹ Any celebration of "internationalism" in the present political context becomes an apology for these activities. From my own political viewpoint, therefore, I see great value in disproving the hypothesis in question. Do such political motivations render this study and the others cited here unscientific? Of course not. One must criticize the work on its merits in terms of the data, techniques, etc. that are used. The motive for undertaking the research must be viewed separately from the conduct of the research. Let us proceed then to an examination of the empirical evidence.

The source of data used here was a pool of 42 surveys on foreign policy attitudes taken by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) for the State Department between 1945 and 1955. Of these surveys, seven included items that made a test of the hypothesis possible. Factor analyses were performed on these seven surveys to see if an internationalism-isolationism dimension could be identified and if items about military offensive action² were loaded upon such a dimension or not.³ The factor analysis was performed on the matrix of intercorrelations among the variables as measured by Goodman and Kruskal's gamma.⁴

FACTOR ANALYSIS RESULTS

We will proceed to discuss survey by survey the rotated factor structures that emerge. To increase clarity, only the relevant elements of the factor matrix will be presented. Let us begin with an examination of the results for the NORC survey of November 1951 presented in Table 1.

In the factor matrix of Table 1, factor V very clearly expresses acceptance or rejection of the international commitments the U.S. had undertaken in 1951. It involves commitment of resources, both military and economic. Along with

¹ See Magdoff (1969), Caspary (1967), Barnet (1968), Williams (1956), Frank (1967), etc. on the question of U.S. intervention and economic domination.

² The term "military offensive action" has been used here in an effort to escape the pejorative connotation of such words as "jingoistic," "aggressive," and "belligerent" which are sometimes used. (The difficulties of finding a non-pejorative label are great. Even the word "offensive" has a double meaning, so we were obliged to use "military offensive" to avoid ambiguity.)

³ Bobrow and Wilcox (1966) and Laulicht, and Paul (1964) have both reported factor analyses of public opinion surveys on international issues. Neither study is applicable to the questions posed here, however, due to the lack of data on our key variables. Bobrow's survey data is concerned primarily with fallout shelters and antiballistic missiles and it contains no internationalism items. Laulicht's data is devoted mostly to various means of tension reduction and it contains no items on military offensive action.

⁴ The factor analysis program used was "Mesa I," from the program library of the Northwestern University Computer Center. It is a modification of the program BIMD 17, and incorporates the principal components method. For communality estimates (entries in the diagonal of the correlation matrix), the option of entering the "absolute value of the largest correlation of x_i with x_j (Program Manual, p. 2)" was chosen (see also Harman, 1960, p. 86). Rotated factors were obtained from the varimax subroutine of the Mesa I program. This is an orthogonal rotation to "simple structure."

general willingness to sacrifice, it calls for aid to particular widely separated regions—Europe and Korea. This factor can be called, therefore, an internationalism-isolationism dimension as those terms are understood in the Cold War context. Our first finding then, is that items with a face-content of Cold War internationalism actually do load heavily on a single factor.

Items on the U.N. are found loaded not on the fifth or internationalism factor, as might be expected, but on the first. It can be seen that the first factor revolves around approval or disapproval of the conduct of the Korean War. It is the U.N.'s role in that war that apparently is in question here, and not the quite distinct general question of support for international organization. Many who were dissatisfied with the U.N. policy in Korea were probably still supporters of the U.N. in general.

Having identified an internationalism-isolationism dimension, further examination reveals the item expressing military offensive action, "go to war with Russia now," has a loading of only .028 on that factor. The hypothesis under question is not confirmed. Before examining the results of the other surveys, a few more observations can be made.

TABLE 1: Factor Analysis of Survey 114, 11-22-51

Questionnaire Item	Factor I	Factor II	Factor V	Factor VI
Send military supplies to Europe	.147	.104	.680	.005
Continue Marshall Plan aid	.261	.136	.743	.106
U.S. was right to send troops to Korea	.356	.029	.635	.034
Too many sacrifices for defense	-.239	-.084	-.712	.055
Approve of the way officials in Washington handle foreign affairs	.869	.166	.293	.058
Approve of the way officials in Washington handle domestic affairs	.820	.127	.253	.034
Truman was right to dismiss MacArthur	.573	.190	.217	-.121
Satisfied with U.N. progress so far	.581	.200	.239	.064
U.S. doing all it should for U.N.	.500	-.139	-.052	-.201
Expect Korea agreement soon	.148	.817	.028	-.129
If not, continue talks anyway	.204	.727	.098	-.158
Go to war with Russia now	-.077	-.502	.028	.661
U.N. is hopeless with Russia in it	-.202	-.623	-.111	.342
Agree to limit arms	.010	.568	.066	.055
Expect war	-.066	-.344	-.072	.621
If we attack Communists more in Korean war, Russia will intervene	.070	-.005	-.027	.757

The "war with Russia now" item loads on not one, but two different factors. One of these is made up principally of the items, "expect war," and "expect Soviet attack." Thus desire to attack Russia is seen as related to expectation of attack

from Russia. It may be that the expectations of attack are the source of these expectations. Perhaps this cluster represents the effect of projection on hypothesis often mentioned in the literature.⁵ The expectations of Soviet aggression would then be seen as the consequence, not the cause of the respondent's aggressive posture. Further data, however would be necessary to establish which of these interpretations is more accurate.

The other factor on which this preventive war item loads is one consisting of approval of and hopes for negotiation. Thus the usual expectation that offensive action and conciliatoriness are at opposite ends of a continuum is fulfilled here, but only partially.

For further evidence on the validity of the findings, let us examine several more factor analyses. The first of these is shown in Table 2 (NORC 120). Factor I here is quite similar to factor II of survey 114 (Table 1). It contains items both on negotiation and conciliation, and on offensive action. In this case there are three items which represent severe offensive military action. That they all tend to load on one factor gives further evidence of the possible existence of an offense factor.

Factor VI consists of items on the U.N., foreign trade, and sacrifices for defense; items usually associated with internationalism. Thus we have a second bit of evidence of independent "internationalism" and "support for military offensive action" dimensions. It can be seen that the loadings on factor VI are fairly weak, leaving much variance unaccounted for. On the other hand, none of the individual internationalism items is loaded appreciably on the offensive action factor, factor I.

TABLE 2: Factor Analysis of Survey 120, 5-28-52

Questionnaire	Factor I	Factor V	Factor VI
Expect agreement soon in Korea peace talks	.532	.510	-.200
Force Communists to truce by air and sea attacks against China	-.745	.019	-.040
U.S. has made too many concessions in talks	-.598	-.038	-.052
If talks break down what should we do? (Coded for: pull out, negotiate, miscellaneous, use A-bomb)	.538	-.322	-.154
Truce at Present line would be success	.487	.199	.011
In war with Russia, use A-bomb right away	-.606	.011	-.077
Stay in the United Nations	.160	-.062	.466
Too many sacrifices for defense	-.016	-.087	-.480
Buy more foreign goods	.088	-.281	.478
Education	-.068	-.072	.538
Threaten war if Communists attack another country	-.382	.416	-.082
Russia has enough A-bombs to do heavy damage in many American cities in event of war	-.011	-.491	.007

⁵ See, for example: Gladstone, (1959); Klineberg, (1964, pp. 83-85); Frank, (1967, pp. 67, 87, 130).

TABLE 3: Factor Analysis of Survey 108, 4-18-51

Questionnaire Item	Factor I	Factor III	Factor II
Strong steps against China at risk of war	.038	-.371	.614
Bomb Chinese bases	.115	-.339	.725
Help Chiang attack the mainland	.292	-.271	.731
Truman right in dismissing MacArthur	.109	-.201	-.863
Approve of handling of foreign affairs by government officials	.090	-.240	-.778
U.S. was right to send troops to Korea	.378	-.778	-.218
Continue to keep U.S. troops in Korea	.196	-.950	.024
End war when S. Korea is liberated or drive Communists from N. Korea	-.019	.699	-.331
Troops to build up the defense of Europe	.467	-.535	-.004
Economic aid to friendly Asian countries	.700	-.173	.099
Military aid to Asian countries threatened by Communism	.637	-.383	.256
Reduce economic aid	-.700	.000	.064
Too many sacrifices for defense	-.450	.138	.073
If war with China would Russia join	-.040	.003	-.095

Factor Analysis of Survey 124, 10-15-52

Questionnaire Item	Factor I	Factor III	Factor II
Expect war	-.020	-.155	.680
Break relations with Russia	-.061	-.301	.528
Go to war with Russia now	-.056	.158	.668
Take an active part in world affairs	.054	.802	-.358
Korean war has been worth fighting	.499	.605	-.114
If Communists attack other countries, help defend, or stay out	-.237	.755	-.157
Education	-.246	.518	-.319
Government did all it should have to prevent N. Korean invasion in the first place	.830	-.153	.133
Government has done all it should to reach agreement in Korea peace talks	.751	.095	-.079
Approve of the way officials in Washington handle foreign affairs	.747	.094	-.050
Approve of the way officials in Washington handle problems in this country	.691	-.033	.004
U.N. very useful, moderately, or not at all	.524	.159	.112

As the definition indicates, we are not concerned with all military action but with action that involves taking the offensive. The usefulness of this distinction is borne out empirically in the factor analysis of surveys 108 and 124 (Table 3). On survey 108 two distinct factors emerge concerning military action in the Korean War. One has large loadings from items on supporting the U.S. troop commitment to the war. The large loadings on the other factor are contributed by items on bombing Chinese bases, "unleashing Chiang K'ai-shek" against the mainland, and taking "strong steps" against China (as well as two items on the Truman-MacArthur controversy which revolved around these same policies).

It is interesting to note that support for "liberating" North Korea rather than stopping at the 38th parallel loaded much more heavily on the factor of military commitment than on the military offensive factor. This lends itself to the interpretation that U.S. citizens perceived as essentially defensive what the Chinese perceived (see Whiting, 1960) as offensive. This is evidence of the phenomenon of "biased perception of what is equable" which Osgood views as a major element in the dynamics of international conflict (1959, p. 305). UN!

On survey 124, (Table 3), we find that support for "war with Russia now" is not correlated with "defend other countries if Communists attack." Slightly more difficult to interpret is the item: "If peace talks fail, pull out, hold the present line, or attack the Chinese." This does not correlate with "war with Russia now," even though the third alternative is an offensive action. When the question is posed: "attack China in Korea, in China until Korea truce, or in China until regime overthrown," the result is different. Those who would defeat the Chinese regime tend strongly to show a preference for war with Russia. Counter attack within the existing theatre of war, then, is viewed very differently from crossing a national border to open a new front.

Still further evidence is provided by survey 137 (see Table 4). Here all the items on the "offense" factor have to do with using nuclear weapons first in a conflict with Russia or China. Items concerning U.S. participation in the French effort in Indochina fall on a separate factor. It may be surmised that such intervention was seen as defensive and internationalist against a Communist enemy that had taken the offensive.

On survey 094, the item "use the H-bomb if Europe is attacked" had negligible loading on a factor composed of items on aid to and approval of Europe (see Table 5). On survey 109, once again, internationalism items are not loaded on the "offense" factor (see Table 6). Here this factor is composed entirely of various possibilities of escalation against the Chinese during the Korean War. On survey 117 we get two "offense" factors. One is confined to escalation in Korea. The other revolves around the Soviet Union (see Table 7).

This exhausts the available surveys with the necessary items. Although the factor structure is not entirely consistent from survey to survey, the independence of "offensive action" and "internationalism"—as defined here—holds without exception.

INTERPRETATION

How are we to explain the discrepancy between these results and those cited earlier in support of the hypothesis? Let us consider McClosky's finding of an association between isolationism and jingoism. Is the discrepancy attributable to differences between his concept of "jingoism" and our concept of "military offensive action?" As operationalized in the respective questionnaire items, the two do not seem very different. McClosky's jingoism items were: "A nation faced with a bunch of really dangerous enemies might be better off to 'shoot first and ask questions afterward;'" and "Let's face it, the only way to bring peace and order back to the world is to make America the one powerful nation on earth." The first of these is quite similar to NORC items such as "go to war with Russia now,"

TABLE 4: Factor Analysis of Survey 137, 4-22-54

Questionnaire Item	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
Take an active part in world affairs	-.113	.454	.084
If dissatisfied with foreign policy, why?			
Want tougher Indochina policy, withdrawal, misc., fear war	-.205	.612	.075
Do more to help Indochina	.118	.637	.058
Fight until Communists defeated or until truce	.103	.611	.324
Use troops, air force only, nothing, in Indochina	.209	.570	-.043
Use H-bomb on China if Chinese make all-out attack on Indochina	.841	-.010	.172
Use H-bomb on Russia if Russia attacks Western Europe	.912	.037	.271
Warn Russia of H-bomb attack if Communist armies attack any other country	.664	.278	.093
In big war with Russia, use H-bomb right away, only if they use if first, never	.621	.244	.222
Agree with Russia never to use A weapons	-.130	-.198	.752
Expect Russians would keep such a promise	-.373	-.030	.797
Much chance of important agreements at Geneva Conference on Korea and Indochina	-.116	-.019	.443
Admit China to the U.N. if satisfactory settlement is reached on Korea and Indochina	-.071	-.057	-.551

TABLE 5: Factor Analysis of Survey 094, 1-18-50

Questionnaire Item	Factor III
Take an active part in world affairs	.399
Send military supplies to Europe now	.608
Continue aid to Europe under Marshall Plan	.746
Too much spending on Marshall Plan aid	-.904
As cut by President Truman, Marshall Plan spending is still too much	-.926
Use the H-bomb if Europe is attacked by Russia	-.012

TABLE 6: Factor Analysis of Survey 109, 5-24-51

Questionnaire Item	Factor I	Factor II	Factor V	Factor VI	Factor VII
Cross border and bomb Communist bases in China	.245	.856	.009	.034	-.195
Help Chiang attack the Mainland	.098	.870	.031	.055	.004
Bombing bases and helping Chiang would end the war sooner	.134	.879	-.076	.100	-.090
Truman was right to dismiss MacArthur	.286	-.732	.172	.231	.151
U.S. was right to send troops	.769	-.061	.289	.425	.099
Keep U.S. troops in Korea	.845	.143	.104	.404	.057
End Korean war if Communists leave the South	-.674	-.428	-.093	-.043	.024
Send military supplies to Europe	.315	.096	.190	.823	.147
Send U.S. troops to Europe	.303	.121	.203	.834	.079
Europe will do its share	.106	-.118	.114	.660	.569
Satisfied with allied coop.	-.106	-.134	-.037	.252	.733
Satisfied with U.N. progress	.035	-.168	.340	-.003	.833
U.N. very important to world peace	.234	-.144	.487	.160	.726
Give U.N. power to call U.S. troops	.160	-.077	.739	.139	.206
A single federal government for the U.S. and Europe	-.079	-.008	.539	.155	.095

TABLE 7: Factor Analysis of Survey 117, 3-14-52

Questionnaire Item	Factor III	Factor I
Bomb Chinese bases	.915	.048
Aid Chiang in attacking the mainland	.622	.117
Bombing bases would lead to war with China	-.776	-.185
If war with China, Russia would join in	-.530	-.088
(Asked of those respondents who would defend countries against Chinese attack:) Stop the invasion or attack China	-.620	-.383
The only way to stop Communism is to go to war	.298	.586
Go to war with Russia now	.393	.759
Expect agreement in Korea truce talks	.104	-.804
Continue talks anyway (asked of those who didn't expect agreement)	-.314	-.692
Attack China even without our allies (asked of those who said attack China rather than hold the present line or withdraw)	.072	.516

"make air and sea attacks against China," "in a big war with Russia, use A-bomb right away." The second of McClosky's items, however, does not involve military offensive action, and appears on the face of it to be closer to the definition of isolationism than of jingoism.

If we examine McClosky's indicators of isolationism, we may find a major source of the discrepancy. These items involve more than neutral expressions of withdrawal from international commitments. They contain a mix of expressions of hostility against or disapproval of foreigners. They refer to "so-called allies," "cheap labor in most other nations," "old quarrels Europeans have been having for centuries," and countries "resenting what we have done for them." Furthermore, the internationalist pole of his items lack the Cold War commitment implicit in the ones used here.

It appears, therefore, that the kinds of questions McClosky asked tapped feelings of resentment against foreigners and that this resulted in correlation with the jingoism items. Our own findings indicate, on the other hand, that expressions of unwillingness to support the current American international commitments are not related to jingoism in this fashion.⁶

Many who are internationalists in this sense support military offensive action and many who are isolationist in this sense do not.

McClosky's operational definition of isolationism is not an arbitrary one. His items are drawn from the literature of traditional American isolationist pressure groups. It is interesting to discover that the appeals of these groups touch a nationalistic-jingoistic chord in those who respond to them. But we must not be led by this evidence to believe that those who accept today's "internationalist" American foreign policy are nicer—that is, are less likely to seek violent solutions—than those who reject it.

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⁶ This result also appears to disagree with Fensterwald's finding of association between preference for withdrawal from Europe and intervention in Asia. But Fensterwald's "westward-looking" scale is contaminated with anti-Europe statements which naturally tend to increase the correlation with the "eastward-looking" scale. For example, two of the items are: "We should tell European countries . . . to expect no aid from us;" and "most of our allies are not worth bothering about (1958, p. 305)."

As for the findings of Farris and Lane, mentioned at the beginning of this paper, they relate personality variables to isolationism and/or jingoism but they don't test the association of these traits with each other.

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